

# Jargon buster



**The key terms you may hear in  
relation to further education  
and higher education**

# Jargon buster

We have put together this jargon buster to go through some of the most common terms that may come up in a conversation about Further and Higher Education. This list is likely not exhaustive but may be able to point you in the right direction of the service you are looking for. It may also be worthwhile reading this alongside the Progression Routes sheet for level clarification.

## Further Education (FE)

Refers to the qualifications taken after school, generally between the ages of 16 and 18. The most common places to study are college or sixth form. To enter Higher Education, you will need a Level 3 qualification(s) that you can gain at FE, such as:

**A-levels:** The academic qualifications gained from studying at a sixth form or college, students can choose 3 or 4 subjects.

**BTEC:** Vocational qualifications generally gained through studying at college. BTECs provide theoretical and practical knowledge in a range of subjects, and students choose one subject area.

## Higher Education (HE)

Refers to the qualifications that are taken at level 4 or above, i.e. taken after A-levels or equivalents. This includes university degrees, higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. The most commonly heard of routes are:

**Degree:** A Level 6 qualification achieved through successful completion of a course of study at university or college. They can also be referred to as a Bachelors, e.g. Bachelor of Arts (BA).

**Degree apprenticeships:** A degree apprenticeship is an apprenticeship course where a student can gain a full bachelor's (Level 6 HE) or master's (Level 7 HE) degree upon completion. Students will spend most of their time working for their employers with a portion of their time studying at the partnered university, college or training provider.

**HADA's:** Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

**Higher Apprenticeships:** A higher apprenticeship is an apprenticeship course where students can gain Level 4 and above. Students will spend most of their time working for their employers with a portion of their time studying at the partnered university, college or training provider.

## UCAS: University and College Admissions Service

The central organisation who handle higher education applications across the UK.

**Adjustment:** A service available from A-level results day for students who have gained higher results than expected and would like to apply for another institution and/or course with higher entry requirements.

**Clearing:** A service that opens on A-level results day for students without a place at a higher education institution. These students can apply to other courses to attempt to gain a place on a course with spaces still available.

**Extra:** An additional period of time to apply for courses through UCAS when someone has not applied during the main UCAS application period or has not received offers of a place.

**Firm choice:** A student's first choice, this is the institution and course they will attend if they meet the conditions of their offer.

**Insurance choice:** A student's second choice of higher education, usually with slightly lower entry requirements. This is the institution and course a student will attend if they do not meet the terms of their Firm choice.

**School Direct:** Part of the UCAS Teacher Training application scheme – for students studying postgraduate teacher training programmes based in a participating school.

**Track:** The online service allowing applicants to track the status of their higher education applications.

## Offers

**Conditional offer:** In your application, this is an offer of a place on a course subject to conditions. To be accepted on the course, you'll need to meet the conditions – usually related to your exam results (e.g. getting BBC at A-level).

**Unconditional offer:** In your application to a course, this is an offer of a place on a course with no conditions.

## Some admissions tests

**BMAT:** The Biomedical Admissions Test. A form of medical admissions test required by certain universities.

**UCAT:** The UK Clinical Aptitude Test. An admissions test required by some medical and dental schools across the UK.



## Finance

**Bursary:** A non-repayable monetary award made to students who satisfy certain criteria as set by the awarding universities and colleges.

**DSA:** Disabled Student Allowance is a government grant available to students who may need additional support (e.g. specialist equipment, printing costs, or a note taker) through their studies as a result of a disability or long-term health condition.

**Fee waivers:** These reduce your tuition fees, either on their own, or in a broader package of support with a bursary. Who can receive a waiver, and how much, is decided by each individual university. You can apply via individual universities.

**Hardship funds:** If you find yourself struggling financially at university, you can apply for extra money, the amount of which is decided by the university.

**SFE (Student Finance England):** Student Finance England manage applications for maintenance and tuition fee loans across England. You can also find information for Student Finance Wales and Student Finance Scotland.

## Styles of learning

**Lecture:** A style of teaching whereby staff deliver content to students on a course, with students taking notes.

**Seminar:** Smaller, more interactive, group teaching. Usually centred on group discussion with some work to prepare prior to the session.

**Tutorial:** One-to-one or small group sessions with a lecturer or tutor where the student can discuss their own work e.g. assignments in more detail.

The course is likely to be split into 'Modules': A period of study covering a particular topic. Many programmes are divided into modules with a certain number of modules required to complete a course.

## Types of degree course

**BA:** Bachelor of Arts, the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying an arts or humanities discipline.

**BSc:** Bachelor of Science, the undergraduate degree awarded to those studying a scientific discipline.

**Combined Honours:** A degree made up of more than one subject (e.g. BA (Hons) English Language and Linguistics).

**Master's degree:** Refers to a degree achieved at level 7. They are usually studied after an undergraduate degree (or equivalent) and are 1 – 2 years in length.

**Sandwich course:** A course with an additional year in which you work in the profession you're studying for.

**Undergraduate degree:** A qualification achieved at level 6 which usually last around 3 or 4 years. This is also called a 'Bachelor's degree'. Available to those who have completed A-levels, BTECS or equivalent.

## Apprenticeships

**Competitive Salary:** This means the salary and benefits will be in line with similar roles for other organisations or that it depends on your current skills and experience. Benefits could include a pension, access to a car, leisure facilities or a relocation allowance if you have to move.

**National Apprenticeship Service (NAS):** The NAS is part of the Skills Funding Agency and is a government agency that coordinates apprenticeships in England, enabling people to enter the skilled trade professions. Please visit [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) for more information.

**Sector:** An industry or part of an industry, covering groups of related occupations. Examples of sectors/ industries in apprenticeships are construction, engineering, health, manufacturing, accounting and management.

**Skills Funding Agency (SFA):** The Skills Funding Agency are responsible giving colleges, training providers and employers the right funding to help adults, young people, the unemployed and people with low skill levels to get the skills they need for employment.

**Standards:** Employers from over 200 organisations have been working together to develop a range of new apprenticeship standards approved by the Department for Education. An apprenticeship standard is a template for the way an apprenticeship is delivered, including: what an apprentice will do during their apprenticeship; and the skills and behaviours they will need to perform in the role they are training for.

## University

**Campus University:** A campus university is a term used to describe a university that is situated on one site, with student accommodation, teaching and research facilities, and leisure activities all together.

## Other

**CV:** A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is a primary part of any job search, and is a great way of pulling together all of your skills, experience and qualifications in one readable document.

**Cover letter:** A cover letter differs from your CV in that you are able to write about your skills and experience in more depth – and with the particular job in mind. It is very important that you write about your skills and experience that are relevant to the specific role you are applying for.

**Deferral:** In your application to a degree course, this is what to do if you'd like to carry an offer over to start it in the following academic year.

**Gap year:** Students may decide to take a year out of their studies before beginning a higher education course, this year can be used to work, travel or volunteer.

**Undergraduate:** An undergraduate is someone who has not yet completed their first degree (Level 6 qualification). You may also hear undergraduate degree which is the completed qualification.

**Postgraduate:** A postgraduate is someone who has completed their first degree and is now working towards a postgraduate qualification (e.g. Masters degree – Level 7). You may also hear postgraduate degree which is the completed qualification.